MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT BY THE YEAR 2003

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BY
NORM HURST
COMMAND COLLEGE XV1
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This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future, but rather to project a number of possisble scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future-- creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

California, and indeed the nation, is becoming more culturally diverse. Population shifts, immigration, and changes in birthrates all contribute to the changing diversities in our communities. As the population changes, so does the work force. It is estimated that in California, by the year 2005, half the population will be people of color who will speak some eighty different languages.[1]

According to data from the 1990 census, Southern California is growing rapidly. The areas experiencing the greatest percentage of growth are the counties on the fringe of the Los Angeles metropolitan area.[2] San Bernardino and Riverside Counties are each among the top forty counties that experienced the most growth in the nation between 1980 and 1990. A recent study of Department of Motor Vehicle registration and license data showed that the most frequent destinations for residents relocating out of Los Angeles County were the neighboring counties of San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, and Ventura.[3]

A Changing Work Force

As a result of demographic changes, California will have a more culturally-diverse work force in the decade to come. Managers will be challenged with a wide variety of values, work ethics, customs, and behaviors that are culturally-rooted.[4] A study by the Hudson Institute

(1987) estimates that 85% of the entry level work force in the year 2000 will be people of color of both sexes and white women.[5]

As law enforcement work forces become more culturally diverse, command-level managers must be prepared to effectively manage culturally diverse work forces to achieve their organizations' missions. A study was recently conducted to answer the question, "What skills and knowledge must command-level police managers have to effectively manage a culturally diverse work force by the year 2003?"[6]

Three closely related questions to the issue were also examined. They are: What will be the structure of cultural diversity training; What will be the status of funding for management training related to cultural diversity; and, What will be the status of measuring effectiveness of managing cultural diversity?

The Value of Diversity Management Skills

The acquisition of knowledge and skills about work force diversity has been described as "good background music" to the rules that organizations have to shape people's behavior.[7] Good diversity training helps to break down the stereotypic beliefs that result in prejudice and can be an important supplement to the training most managers receive.[8]

Successful organizations of the future, including law enforcement agencies, will have people throughout the organization who understand the strengths and values of diversity, and these two concepts will be deliberately managed.[9] Organizations are not the only beneficiaries of valuing diversity, individuals are as well. According to Lennie

Copeland, a diversity consultant, "A person who learns to value diversity achieves a certain peace of mind." People grow by learning to manage across racial and cultural lines and thus become better managers.[10]

The ability of law enforcement agencies to manage cultural diversity is essential, and, if not done, agencies will not be able to increase their effectiveness. Cultural diversity training must be an ongoing process and woven into every aspect of a manager's development.[11]

According to Copeland,

> "Diversity is emerging as one of the most serious issues in the work place today, yet most employers are not prepared to deal with it, nor are their managers. Many managers grew up having little contact with other cultures. They are actually "culturally deprived," and their graduate school texts did not cover the kinds of situations that arise in today's multicultural settings."[12]

Writing about the work of Elsie Cross, a diversity consultant, Jonathan Tilove observes that many of the nation's largest corporations are taking steps to prepare their managers for a future that will be affected by a multicultural work force. Cross' work often includes teaching managers how people of different races and cultures are different and how the focus of white male managers may make it difficult for anyone but other white males to succeed.[13]

Learning to look at people as individuals - each with their own strengths, weaknesses, and culturally-rooted values - is an important part of managing diversity. Work forces of the future must function as heterogeneous organizations.[14] Oliver Thompson, Chief of Police in

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Inglewood, California, says cultural diversity management training must include "... cultural awareness of all represented groups [in the organization]," and "... be ongoing, ensuring that all represented persons understand the vital part they play in making the organization's vision and mission a reality and not just a visible placard."[15]

Diversity Management Skills

A review of the literature related to cultural diversity led to the recurring identification of six skills and areas of knowledge that are viewed by diversity experts as necessary for effective management in a culturally diverse work force. They are:

o Knowledge of one's own ethnocentrism - knowing ones own cultural roots and instrumental values and biases.[16]

o Knowledge of cultural relativism - the opposite of ethnocentrism. The effective manager must know the cultural values of the people he or she works with.[17]

o Mentoring and coaching skills.[18]

o Communicating in high and low context conditions - the social and culture conditions, including non-verbal communications, that influence communication and understanding.[19]

o Conflict mediation in cross cultural disputes.[20]

o Empowering the work force to achieve the organization's vision.[21]

Using a Future Scenario

A futures driven scenario can give an organization the foundation on which to build a strategy to deal with change. Forecast data can be used to envision a future reality. Such a scenario was developed to give a hypothetical law enforcement agency just such a picture.

The target organization is a fictional Sheriff's Department on the fringe of Los Angeles County. The Sheriff is a thirty year veteran of the department and has been at the head of the organization for three years. As he addresses the Annual California Peace Officers' Association (CPOA) Conference in May 2003, the Sheriff looks back on the events and trends that affected the diversity of the department and what the department did to prepare its future command-level managers to manage a culturally diverse work force effectively.

"Ladies and gentlemen, during my thirty years with the Empire County Sheriff's Department, many changes have occurred to the work force of the department, as well as in the communities we serve. When I started with the Sheriff's Department in 1973, our work force numbered 500, and other than a few clerks and jail matrons, it was almost entirely comprised of white males with military backgrounds. The county's population was under one million, and it was over 75% white.

Ten years ago, the department stood at over 2,000. Sixty percent of our employees were sworn deputies, and about one third of them were women. We had some problems with sexual discrimination complaints, but compared to most departments, we noticed very few problems related to the diversity of our work force.

As you recall, about that time the economy was in a recession and reduced tax revenues caused us to lay off over 400 people. Over the years, we've only been able to replace about half of those positions, and none of them were sworn police officers. There were some predictions from government economists that the unemployment rate in the state would reach 25%. Fortunately, that didn't happen. The public's perception of law enforcement's ability to deal with crime and their personal safety declined steadily because of racial violence and rising crime rates.

Three events occurred that had significant impacts on our work force and what we had to do to effectively manage it. In the spring of 1996, the legislature mandated that police and fire services be regionalized. This caused a lot of disruption and morale initially plummeted. In the summer of that year, race-related riots occurred between black and Asian students on the Cal State L.A. campus. The violence spread to several other campuses throughout southern California. We even experienced some racial clashes within the department when some employees made insensitive remarks that caused some to feel hurt and angry. Our work force looked very different then than it did back in 1973.

A third event occurred in the spring of 1998 that shaped the future of the work force. The legislature mandated that all police agencies had to reflect the exact racial demographics of the community plus or minus two percent within three years.

In 1993, we anticipated a more diverse work force in the future. We realized that our command level managers were not equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively manage a culturally diverse work force, and the public wanted to feel served and protected by a work force that understood their cultural values as well.

A group of our supervisors and middle managers were trained in diversity management skills. I tasked them with sharing their knowledge and skills with the entire department. Every year since then, we've gotten a select group of new people trained. Today, many of the first people who learned to manage diversity are in command positions, and they are making sure that we keep a vision of valuing the diversity of our employees.

What has the acquisition of work force diversity skills done for the Empire County Sheriff's Department? Our turnover rate for all employee groups is less than half today of what it was five years ago.

Today, the department has 1,600 employees, half of them sworn. Forty percent of our deputies are white and sixty percent are people of color. A third of our employees speak English as a second language.

Each year we see positive gains in job satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. We haven't had an EEO complaint in the last two years. Five years ago, we had an average of one per month. Our productivity is up in every division and the public's perception of our ability to deal with crime and their personal safety is on the rise.

I would encourage you to consider the work force diversity needs of your agency and provide the training to your current and future managers that will increase your effectiveness."

Developing an Organizational Vision

A Mission Statement was developed for the fictional agency. The Mission Statement provides a visionary framework in which a strategy can be developed from the scenario. The macro-mission statement for the fictional Empire County Sheriff's Department is:

> The Empire County Sheriff's Department is committed to the principles of public service and safety through the fair and impartial enforcement of laws, and through active community involvement.

The micro-mission statement, dealing with its commitment to the people of the organization, is:

> The Empire County Sheriff's Department is committed to providing a working environment that honors and values the cultural diversity of all its members, and recognizes that within differences lies strength. The command staff is committed to having and using the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively manage and lead a culturally diverse work force.

A Partnership Strategy

A strategy was then developed to form a plan to bring about a desired future that would include the command staff's commitment to effective management of cultural diversity.

Before the strategy was selected, an analysis of the department's external environment and organizational capabilities was conducted. Then key stakeholders were identified, along with their assumptions about the issue. Stakeholders are individuals or groups who impact what is done, may be impacted, or care about what is done. The most important stakeholders to the issue and the plan are: the Commission on POST, the university extension staff, the Empire County Deputy Sheriff's Association, and politically active organizations that support racial and ethnic causes.

The strategy is: the Sheriff would appoint a member of his staff to be a project manager. The project manager would form a management team from a diagonal slice of the organization. This team's job would be to contact the local California State University Extension to aid in the development of curriculum designed to provide cultural understanding and diversity management to current and future command-level managers in the department. The management team's job

would also include selecting a contact person at the university with whom agreement could be reached about goals and objectives of the program.

In effect, the department would form a partnership with the university extension to develop an ongoing cultural diversity management program. The goals of the partnership would be to:

o Identify the different cultural groups to be the subject of awareness training.

o Identify for each group the relevant and important issues that are valued by members of that cultural group.

o Develop a set of behavioral objectives based on those issues.

o Develop instructional and experiential plans designed to enable members of the department to reach the behavioral objectives.

The department would send a select group of first-line supervisors and middle managers, based on input from the project team, to attend the training each time it is offered. The department would task those who are selected to concentrate on inculcating diversity awareness into organizational values, in concert with the macro- and micro-mission statements, through its employee development programs and their own behaviors.

A Plan To Manage Change

A transition management plan was developed to manage the change needed to bring about implementation of the strategic plan. The plan is presented below for the fictional department to facilitate its use as a strategy for any agency with similar organizational needs. The plan is presented in detail to show how to successfully implement the strategy described above.

Key stakeholders and members of the department, based on their influence or support relative to the issue, were identified as the critical mass. The group includes: the Sheriff; the executive member of the department responsible for directing all human resource functions; the division commander responsible for employee development and training; the department's cultural awareness facilitator; the associate dean of instruction at the local California State University Extension; and the POST consultant responsible for cultural awareness training certification.

After the critical mass was identified, each person's readiness and capability to support the strategy was assessed and charted. This assessment is important to the management team, because the team must work with the group to gain and keep their support for the strategy.

Next, the critical mass was assessed as to its members' commitment to the strategy and issue. This assessment is important to the management team as they negotiate with the key actors to achieve their desired commitment and support.

Management Structure

The management structure recommended for this strategy is a Project Management Team representing a diagonal slice of the department, with the project manager appointed by the Sheriff. The team members should be selected by the project manager and represent both line and staff functions of the department with responsibility for managing operations, recruitment, and training. Work done by the team will be an added responsibility for the members in addition to their

regular duties. Participants on the team should consent to serve and be committed to the idea of managing change in the transition state.

The recommended manager for this project is the executive responsible for human resources. This person has overall responsibility for training, recruitment, and personnel administration in the department, and is in the best position to select the team members who can assess the diversity training needs of the department.

The following organization chart illustrates how the Management Team can be structured:

<u>Project Manager</u>

<u>2 Field Operations Bureau Reps.</u>   <u>2 Corrections Bureau Reps.</u>
<u>1 Employee Development Rep.</u>   <u>1 Employee Services Rep.</u>
<u>1 Community Liaison Rep.</u>   <u>1 Research/Planning Rep.</u>

The responsibilities of each team member must be clearly defined. Factors that include collateral duties, availability, and ability, must be considered when responsibility for action is fixed. The team's duties should include:

o   Collaborating with university officials about curriculum content and standards.

o   Identifying present and future culturally diverse groups in the work force.

o   Identifying the existing management development programs offered by the department that should be modified to include cultural diversity training.

o   Identifying and selecting members of the department to attend training.

o   Negotiating with POST to obtain certification and tuition reimbursement for training.

o   Identifying supplemental funding sources to pay for training costs not covered by reimbursement.

o   Developing methods to survey the department's members to establish a baseline level of cultural awareness.

o   Establishing methods to periodically re-survey the work force to measure the effect of training and behavior changes.

o   Identifying methods of communicating the micro-mission to all members of the organization.

o   Building support for diversity skills training with stakeholders.

o   Establishing reasonable standards for diversity management that command level managers should be held accountable for.

Conclusions

As California's population grows and becomes more diverse culturally and racially, one can and must expect the state's law enforcement agencies to do likewise. Law enforcement leaders must have a vision of valuing the diversity of the men and women who are and will be society's "thin blue line" of the future.

Learning to manage cultural diversity must be just as important to law enforcement leaders as learning to manage budgets or police tactical operations. Learning to manage cultural diversity won't be as simple as sending a manager or supervisor to a one or two day seminar. It will require an assessment of the organization's present and expected diversity condition, followed by a goal to weave diversity management skills into every part of the organization.

One strategy to bring about such a goal was discussed in this article. An organization, like the fictional Empire County Sheriff's Department, can form a partnership with a public college or university and co-sponsor a diversity management program based on the demographic diversity of a region or county.

A plan like this makes the program accessible to other law enforcement agencies, as well as other government agencies and the private sector. Organizations can provide up-to-date and comprehensive training to a few members who, in turn, can share their knowledge with others in the organization.

Employing private diversity consultants to provide training to supervisors and managers is another option some organizations will find best for their needs. Regardless of the methods chosen to provide training, top management's support for valuing diversity must be firm.

Undoubtedly, funding for diversity management training will be a challenge for all agencies. Co-sponsored training with POST support is one way to approach the issue. Law enforcement leaders must consider diversity management training as important, and find creative ways of providing the funds needed.

Measuring diversity management effectiveness is another related issue that was discussed. The experts agree that a multifaceted approach is best. Suggestions to be considered include periodic attitudinal surveys of the work force, community surveys, measuring recruitment and retention goals, and tracking equal employment and discrimination complaints.

The skills and knowledge to manage future law enforcement work forces must be recognized as critical to the success and effectiveness of an agency. These skills include: knowing one's own ethnocentric values, beliefs, and biases; knowing the culturally relative values and beliefs of the cultural groups represented in the agency; mentoring and coaching; communicating in high and low context conditions; conflict

mediation in cross cultural disputes; and empowering the work force to achieve the organization's vision.

Recommendations

The issue discussed here focused on managing cultural diversity. Other forms of diversity will be increasingly present in future law enforcement work forces. These diversities include gender, age, sexual preference, and persons who are physically challenged. These diversities are also worthy of further study.

ENDNOTES

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